The Marquette County Board of Commissioners met in budget hearing on September 12, 1985 at 5:00 P.M. in Room 231 of the Henry A. Skewis Annex, Marquette, Michigan.

Roll call was held and the following roll recorded:
Absent: None.

Chairperson Lowe read an explanation of the ground rules of budget hearings to all present briefly stating that the County Board will hear the comments of the various department heads in regard to the 1986 proposed budget. After that the County Board will ask questions of the department heads and following that the department budget heads would have an opportunity for additional comment.

James F. Sodergren, County Treasurer, was present to speak to the County Treasurer's Budget. Mr. Sodergren stressed some of the problems in his department which were: 1) audit; they are unable to comply with the recommendation because of limited staff and find it difficult to meet all of the demands. 2) responsibility of deputy treasurer; former deputy treasurers did not get vacations at times which were best for them and in the present the situation remains the same. It is almost impossible for the deputy treasurer to be away from the office for any length of time for extended vacations. It was felt that some additional training may be necessary with other individuals in the department.

Mr. Sodergren commented on the computerized tax systems stating it was difficult to put together. There were no suppliers of a good package, it is very complicated to do with the present system used by Arizala. The school tax is a hard package to finalize but once the County has established a system it will be one of the better systems in the State.

At present Mr. Sodergren stated that he needs four programs from Arizala to prepare the computerized tax records, otherwise these must be done by hand. He felt that the programs were paid for and we should be getting them. Mr. Sodergren felt that new revenues should be sought out throughout the whole County to compensate for loss in revenue sharing. He felt that this loss of revenue sharing would put the burden more on the back of the taxpayer. Mr. Sodergren also felt that the Commercial Forest Reserve Tax should also be looked into. Mr. Sodergren felt that a good need should be taken at our natural resources, he felt that the taxes paid by the Gold Mine north of Ishpeming and the Cleveland Cliff Iron Company were not adequate on mining reserves. He felt that the mining companies were viable industries and they should make every effort to pay their fair share of the taxes. In conclusion Mr. Sodergren felt that he could live with the recommended budget of the County Administrator for Treasurer for the 1986 year.

Questions were asked by Commissioners in regard to what the time frame may be for receiving the Arizala package. It was noted by Mr. Sodergren that Turin, Sands and Marquette Townships and the City of Ishpeming packages have not been received yet. If the County Treasurer's Office has to they can be prepared by hand but that would need be done before October 1, 1985. Inquiries as to how the providing of the cash register system in the Treasurer's office was progressing, were made. Mr. Sodergren answered that the cash register is here at this time. In the next few weeks they will be getting into the software program. Mr. Sodergren then left the meeting.

Paul Nykanen, Register of Deeds, was present to speak in regard to the Register of Deeds proposed 1986 budget. Mr. Nykanen was advised that the electronic typewriter and calculator that he had requested is in the Capital Outlay budget along with some other equipment, in the amount of $4,544.00. Mr. Nykanen stressed the need for more cabinets for filing and the fact that the Register of Deeds office need microfilming of all of it's records. Mr. Nykanen suggested that Doubleday
Bros. had perfected a recording system for deeds and land sales that they would be willing to bring it in to be viewed during the month of December. This type of equipment would help in the further processing of deeds and land sales in the Register of Deeds office in the future. Other than this Mr. Nykanen had no objection to the recommended County Administrator’s 1986 budget for the Register of Deeds office.

Lt. Sweeney of the Michigan State Police Post was present to speak in regard to the Central Dispatch proposed 1986 budget. Lt. Sweeney advised the County Board that he has no problems with the budget as recommended and was only present to answer questions. Commissioners questioned Lt. Sweeney in regard to the possibility of Central Dispatch being funded by users in the future and whether something could be worked out. At this point Lt. Sweeney would suggest that this be pursued within the next year but he was somewhat doubtful as to that possibility.

Bob Taylor, Director of the County Youth Employment Program, was present to speak on the Employment Program proposed 1986 budget. Mr. Taylor felt that funding for the program next year would depend on what is available or what the cutbacks may be and also what effect increases or decreased in grants might have on the program. At this point the funding is uncertain, the proposed budgets for this department is $44,244.00. It was mentioned by the Commissioners that they felt the County was getting their full measure of funding that was available. Mr. Taylor stated that they would negotiate the contract with the Department of Social Services in the next two weeks for the COPE Program. There is funding in the Social Services budget on the State level for this program. Mr. Taylor mentioned that there are several hundred thousands of dollars available in grants for programs and that he would strive to obtain funding for those whenever possible. Mr. Taylor then left the meeting.

The County Board took under consideration the requests of Carolyn Hanson, Friend of the Court, regarding the proposed 1986 budget. The recommended budget for the Friend of the Court was $238,654.00. The Friend of the Court requested an additional half time person to work with the information needed to process Child Support Collection Fees through the Friend of the Court office. Under the Cooperative Reimbursement Grant it is necessary to provide additional information in order to receive the reimbursement. Ms. Hanson stated that the staffing in the Marquette County Friend of the Court’s office is much less than other counties of the same size in Michigan and quoted Allegan County as having eleven employees and Bay County has having twenty five, Marquette County has the equivalent of five and one half employees. She stated that there is more activities this year than there were other years with the possibility of some new legislation. She stated that the Friend of the Court has not been able to collect administrative fees of $2.00 per month from persons having filed a divorce and felt that if a method could be set up for a better collection method on this it would amount to $25,000.00 a year to the County in revenue. She anticipated revenues for the 86 year to be $109,000.00 or over. It was stated by Dennis Aloia, County Administrator, that he is in agreement with the need for the half time person on the staff and is also in agreement with the revenues that Ms. Hanson stated are available. Carolyn Hanson then left the meeting.

The Honorable Judge William Easton, of the 96th District Court, was present to discuss the proposed 1986 District Court budget. The amount requested was $616,089.00, the amount recommended by the County Administrator was $564,322.00. It was also stated that the District Court had $4,314.00 designated in the Capital Improvements budget. Judge Easton stated that if the District Courts become automated then he felt that they could get by without an extra person, however, if automation in the District Court did not come about in 1986 there would be a need for an additional person. Judge Easton stated he has no serious disagreement.
with the recommended budget, but felt that the rental fee for the
Ishpeming District Court should be looked into. The County Board of
Commissioners inquired of Easton felt that the community service works
well in the County but there is a problem with liabilities. He felt
that the sentence should be tailored to fit the crime and that the
District Court would use community service if people could not pay the
fine or had no other funds.

Randell Girard, Personnel Director, was present to speak to the
proposed 1986 Personnel Department budget. The requested budget was
$60,504.00, recommended budget by the County Administrator, was
$52,372.00. It was felt by Mr. Girard that they could live with the
budget as recommended, but that additional funding may be needed if
arbitration comes into being in regard to union grievances. He stated
that the Career Development Program had been reduced somewhat basically
because it was not being used as extensively as was first considered.
Mr. Girard stated that the union negotiations contract for the employees
would be started within the next few weeks and should be finalized by
the Christmas season. Commissioners inquired as to where we were on the
wage scale. Mr. Girard answered that the county wage was based on the
study of nine counties of equal or near equal size and value and that
Marquette County was within 3% of the middle of the labor market. He
felt that it was good position to be in. Benefits for Marquette County
employees are in the upper quarter of the labor market. It was antici-
pated that the County Board would go into closed session later in the
month to determine the County’s position in regard to the labor
contracts.

Henry A. Skewis, County Clerk, was present to speak in regard to the
Plat Board budget. It was stated that the mileage placed in the Plat
Board budget was insufficient to pay the mileage set by statute indi-
cates and that travel should be either increased at this point or during
the quarter or mid-year budget amendments, other than that the Plat
Board has no objection to the recommended budget.

Henry A. Skewis was present to speak in regard to the Jury Commission
budget. It was felt that the Jury Commission could live with the budget
as recommended by the County Administrator.

Dennis Aloia, County Administrator, was present to speak on the
Economic Development budget proposed for 1986. The requested budget was
$78,321.00, recommended budget by the County Administrator was
$73,128.00. Questions asked by the Commissioners were in regard to the
hiring of an Economic Developer. It was stated by Dennis Aloia that the
persons who had made application had either found jobs in other parts of
the country or were no longer interested in the position, and it was
felt that the position would probably have to be advertised again. It
was the suggestion of Comm. DeFant that if the job was not filled by
January, 1986, then we should pull it out of the compensation system and
together with the Economic Development Dept. and the OEDP would consider
re-advertising the position with an offer of more money. It was noted
that there is a $25,000.00 State grant that will not expire until March,
1986 and also the possibility of additional dollars for 1986 that may be
available. It was the suggestion of Comm. Berglund that if the position
cannot be funded fully then they should do away with it altogether and
not consider it further.

Dr. William Birch, Director of the Community Mental Health Program,
was present to speak in regard to the 1986 proposed budget appropriation.
Dr. Birch explained that he was extremely pleased with the program over
the past three years with the staff and the quality of the program. He
felt it was as good as any in the State. The two county Mental Health
Agreement Program is a pattern or model in the State and they are
addressing the problem head on in this County.
Dr. Randy Johnson, Director of the Marquette County Health Dept., was present to discuss the proposed 1986 Health Dept. appropriation. The request was for $752,379.00. It was recommended by the County Administrator that the budget be $702,379.00. This is a $50,000.00 decrease. Dr. Johnson felt that he could live with this if there are no salary increases. Administrative staff suggests elimination of non-mandated programs to compensate for the $50,000.00. Some of the programs may be modified. Also there is a possible thought of increasing fees to support some of the programs. An inquiry was made as to what the non-mandated programs of the Health Dept. were. These include administrative structure, immunization, venereal disease and health information services. It was stated that the Home Health Program is a non mandatory program. Dr. Johnson then left the meeting.

The Honorable Judge Edward A. Quinnell was present to speak in regard to the proposed 1986 Circuit Court budget. Discussions were held in regard to the public defender type of program for appointing attorneys for indigents in the court system. It was explained that in the past public defender systems did not seem to be as economical as court appointed attorneys. There was no question in the Judges mind that attorneys would have to be appointed for indigents, persons with no funds. Judge Quinnell then left the meeting.

Henry Schneider, Director of the Equalization Dept., was present to speak in regard to the proposed 1986 Tax Administration and Equalization budgets. Mr. Schneider had requested the reinstatement of two persons on his staff. It was the recommendation of the County Administrator that these positions not be filled. If there are not additional non-mandated programs added, it was felt that the Equalization Dept. can live with the budgets. Mr. Schneider did state that he felt there was a need for two more people for staff to do a better job of doing studies and to eliminate arguments on equalization property, and he recommended that in the near future these two positions be placed back into the budget. It was stated by Dennis Aloin, County Administrator, that he realizes that the Equalization Dept. need additional people but this is limited due to the budget restraints. If the County can recoup additional revenues next year, we should be able to see our way clear to add these personnel. Some inquiries were made regarding the need for a calculator and a plenometer for the Equalization Dept. The operation of these machines were explained by Mr. Schneider and it was felt that the machines were necessary. They are approved in the Capital Outlay budget.

The Honorable Judge Michael J. Anderegg, was present to speak in regard to the Probate Court budget. Judge Anderegg had no objections to the Probate Court’s several budgets, with the exception of the Child Care budget from which $63,000.00 had been deleted. Under the Child Care budget there had been no increase in the last years for foster parents care and it was felt that a 4% increase should be added to the budget. Also present to speak to the foster care program was Gary Dalton, Community Coordinator, who did an overview on the foster care program. Mr. Dalton distributed graphs and other literature to explain the need for this additional income.

Carol Johns, Foster Home Mother, was present to explain the program with foster children taking into family homes. She had, in her lifetime, had fifty five girls brought into her home under foster care and was very proud of each and every one of them. She felt that being a foster care mother was a very satisfying experience, but also felt that the amounts of money paid for foster care parents was inadequate in view of the fact that these children are treated just the same as the parents own children are and require some additional funding now and then. The average length of stay in a foster home is approximately four months, if the person were placed in a institution it would require approximately eleven months, thereby proving that the foster home care program would be a more pleasing and yet a less expensive program.
There being no further business to come before the budget hearing the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Henry A. Skewis
Marquette County Clerk